is of wood or horn with a studded pommel, and the sheath is of rawhide. There is some variation in size, but the typical weapon is about a foot in length. The best steel is supposed to have tiny undulations in its grain, and comes from Mosul or Damascus. The finer examples have engraved silver hilts and sheaths, and the grip is often bound with silver wire. The khunjir is worn in the sash on the right side and is held with the blade curving downward toward the user. From this position virtually the only stroke is a vertical slashing motion with the raised forearm, and its use does not have the versatility of a straight blade, which, for example, can be used in thrusting. Often the rosary (tesbih, from Arabic subha) is entwined about the hilt. To digress, the Muslim rosary in its complete form consists of 99 beads, separated into groups of 33 by 3 markers, but today this is only found preserved in the homes of the extremely pious or worn around the waist of a dervish. It is used in certain devotional exercises, and the number of beads is popularly supposed to correspond to the 99 names or qualities of God found in the Quran. The common form, such as that referred to above, is of 33 beads with two markers, and has a much simpler application in occupying the hand whenever idle, with no reference whatever to religious sentiment, a substitute for the cigarette. Most are of heavy amberoid beads imported from Germany and strung in a loop ending in three small tassels. The most precious come from Mecca and are

of ebony or some other wood inlaid with silver dots. 789
The rosary may also be carried hanging loosely about the 293
wrist.

The chieftains, and other townspeople of high 411
station, carry pistols, almost always of the automatic type, in oilcloth holsters on the right or left hip, sometimes attached to the belt with a lanyard. The butt is often wrapped in a silk handkerchief, and this, together with the type of holster and the position in which it is worn, mitigates against the most efficient use, as in the case of the dagger. Bodyguards, as well as most of the populace, when fully armed, carry rifles and oilcloth bandoliers of ammunition, the latter hung crossed on the chest. The rifles are usually Iranian Army Mausers. British army weapons, such as the Webley revolver, are [578]
evoided because their possession is not easily explained to the authorities. It is difficult for Americans, in whose homes firearms are commonplace, to appreciate the apprehensiveness of government officers in an area of well-armed people such as this. In Egypt, Iran, Syria, and Turkey, as well as most of Iraq, the bulk of the agricultural population have comparatively few rifles among them and there is little threat of armed revolt in this quarter, save in the case of a few minority groups, such as the Druzes, who have maintained their integrity by precisely this means. The sale of arms and ammunition, [656]
except by almost impossible government formalities, is

of the bowl, two or three. One product of the area is a long wooden cigarette holder, cut from the thin branch of a cherry tree and laboriously drilled, but it has little more than curiosity value for the local people. European cigarette lighters are in great demand, and together with the dagger and the rosary form an important part in every adult male's ensemble. There are several varieties of these, and are Austrian in derivation. Several craftsmen in the town use flint and steel to light their pipes, but this is relatively rare, a survival among the poor and thrifty. Both men and women smoke, the latter as much as their husbands, and there is no restriction on youngsters. Children usually avoid tobacco as a matter of physical distaste, not because of any prohibition laid upon them. During the fasting hours of Ramadan it is considered impolite, if not impious, to smoke on the streets, although tobacco, of course, has no mention in the Quran.

Almost all of the houses are infested with mice, but, insofar as their inroads are not too intensive, they are not regarded as a particular nuisance. Homes of the lower classes, as well as the khan or hotel, are infested with vermin of various types, of which the chief scourge is the flee. Both flies and mosquitos are troublesome in the summer months, and some effort is expended to keep them from infesting, but the greater number of adults pay little attention to them. Scorpions and snakes sometimes turn up, and are killed with the greatest possible dispatch.

dilated and bloodshot, as they hoarsely reiterate their achievements. They are also supposed to be able to "read" over those who have been bitten by snakes and effect their cure. They sell or give onlookers lumps of sugar on which certain symbols have been scrawled. If eaten, this sugar is believed to confer the power of snake-charming. They have other exhibitions, such as mutilating their bodies in various ways without experiencing pain. Hajji Mustafa exhibited his forearms which were covered with scars from past demonstrations. In addition to these displays and their tumultous meetings, the darvishes commonly practise white magic for those who seek their aid, but are for the most part engaged in everyday employment.

The darvishes usually wear the garb of the countryside. Hajji Mustafa wore Kurdish trousers and shirt, but disdained the sash. His headdress consisted of a skullcap with a turban wound flat about it as in the case of the mullas. On formal errands, for example, when he was called to the serai in connection with firing the Ramadan cannon, Hajji Mustafa added a light brown Arab cloak and carried a walking-stick or staff. Some darvishes bind their waists with the rosary of 99 wooden beads. The tools of Hajji Mustafa's darvish activities, observed in his house, consisted of a flag, an old rifle, a sword, a huge tambourine perhaps three feet in diameter, a begging bowl (the traditional badge of the darvish) made of a large hollowed gourd with a strap for carrying it over the shoulder, and a tattered copy of the Shajara (Arabic, "tree") of 'Abd

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peculiar to that village, is always used by the peasant women on their way to the fruit plantations in Tawella. My interpreter told me that the women considered it indecent to show themselves without this hoodie on the back, an attitude similar to that found in Europe in the days of the bustle. During work in the fields I saw a kind of apron in use. This consisted of a large piece of canvas wrapped round the body, the two upper corners being tied together over the left shoulder. A similar protective apron was worn in the village of Derkan while threading tobacco leaves on a string. Another type of dress I discovered was worn—so far as I was given to understand—by new arrivals in Tegunya, and was a little contemptuously described as "Persian dress". This was also a women costume, but comprised of (in some long little lifted up over a low-sitting bed with metal furnishings consisting of a large and several smaller silver bowls[1]. No turban was worn with this dress, but a head with two long flaps that hung down the back. In the same way the head jewellery, a triple chain of coins, was of a different type from that worn by the other women in the village. It was stated to be typical of Hadarmaut[2]. As with the village aristocracy the plain peasant women dons the black veil and shift when visiting towns.

The coloured urban environment evinces a highly heterogeneous picture from the point of view of dress[3]. If I review the various dress types in which my interpreter appeared in the course of our four month cooperation, it will serve to explain what I mean. Her two most important articles of clothing, without which she never left the house, were, as for other urban women unlike the women in the two village environments, the black face veil and shift. Under this her dress could be a costume composed of genuine Kurdish elements, in composition quite like the daughter's dress in the aristocratic village milieu, except that the material and light colours that were exceptional in villages here were the rule. In addition she always wore a belt round her waist, a thing worn only exceptionally by young women of the village, whilst at the same time retaining as usual the trouser casing round her hips—an arrangement she transferred to European panties which she rolled down over the hips, never wearing the elastic round her waist. At the same time, like her teacher colleagues, she showed a tendency to prefer kinds of coarsely-woven tulle or transparent that they disdained the fashioned European petticoats which in this female environment had replaced the loose-sitting shift. Her married colleagues did not wear the turban arrangement and their jewellery was worn in the form of a chain (L 239) placed along the edge of the waistcoat or as a belt around the waist. Under the black *abā* my interpreter might have a long rose nightgown with or without its appurtenant jacket, her home and sleeping dress. Inspired by the European nightgown, this article of clothing, like men's pyjamas, is not in the Kurdish dressing scheme specially a night garment, but is worn all round the clock—a European garment adopted to Kurdish custom. She might wear blouse and skirt or a complete dress tailored or ready-made in precisely the same style as the European-American, though, in accordance with Kurdish custom, it was also slept in. In this coloured urban milieu the "white bride" dress had also been adopted. At their weddings both my interpreter's sisters wore a long white wedding dress with a short white veil. The underwear that went with it was also European except that garters were worn instead of girdle. This adoption of European dress elements meant a breach of the normal pattern: that day

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Fig. 91. Fish waistcoat (E. 2338), cap (E. 2343) surrounded by turban cloth (E. 2331), and scarf (E. 2329).
Fig. 92. Knives and scissors. From left to right: E. 2282 with E. 2286, E. 2284, E. 2280 with E. 2285. Below: cap embroidered with gold and silk (E. 2336).

291 latter in adopting the trouser costume, by discarding the long caftan in favour of short waistcoat or jacket, and now had pockets in the side seams of the trousers. Further storage facilities were afforded by the long pointed ends of the shirt sleeves that could be tied round an object, the waist sash in which a cloth bundle could be stuffed or, possibly, the upper end of a bag.

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293 *Accessories* to the costume, corresponding to the ornaments of women, were pocket knife with horn handle (E. 2277) and the curved dagger, *canjar*[W], with sheath, 0.30 m.–0.40 m. long, the value of which varied according to the execution and the material of the handle and sheath (E. 2282, 0.405 m. long, sheath covered with metal from an English tin, a thimble acting as tip; E. 2283, 0.330 m. long with leather sheath and handle of goat's horn; E. 2284, 0.345 m. long with silver sheath and handle studded with turquoise). The prayer chain or rosary, *tasbih*, composed of 99 beads was worn round the handle of the dagger. These beads could be of horn or other material, every 33rd, being marked (E. 2285 of horn; E. 2286 of fruit pips). As a rule the prayer chain is carried between the fingers or

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by young men wearing European clothes. Only by means of the rosary swinging between the fingers was it possible to distinguish between them and Europeans.

The men wear their hair cut short and are as a rule beardless, though not well-shaved.

093 [302]

Children's dress. A baby's clothes in the villages consisted of a small bib with extra long, pointed arms, a padded jacket, *dishet*, of flowered cotton material (E. 2329) or silk, and a cowl-shaped silk bonnet. On a cool day the mother of a 2-3 year old boy sewed a pair of sack-like trousers, but it was an exception for such small boys to wear such a garment. In the town I saw a boy of about 4 months wearing a dress with a short yoke, a gores, a jacket and a long coat, all of flowered flannel, possibly copied from a European pattern (E. 2330a, c, d, e). The same infant I saw at a wedding clad (although mentally ill) in a dress of rose and light-blue nylon (E. 2330b).

As regards the larger children, both boys and girls in villages and towns wear short-sleeved, striped,

091 E-5 61

Fig. 51. Children's dress in the village, Tegyara.

CONCLUSION

WOMAN'S POSITION IN THE COMMUNITY

As mentioned (p. 68) writers of male travellers' have made comments about the position of Kurdish women in society. With the exception of Frazer[1], who distinguishes between the urban upper class and the village dwellers, Kurdish women are referred to under one heading. However, even from the limited material available to us, it is evident that there are at all events four different environments, each with its own pattern (and this division ignores the nomads). Some emphasize that Kurdish women are "...as free as in any European country"[2], and Rambout declares that "... in Kurdistan more so than in Kurdish women [Figaro de l'homme]"[3]. Even though in the case of the Kurds we must consider ourselves faced by a variant of the Islamic cultural pattern less orthodox than in other Muslim areas, I would point out the risk of using the terms "free position" and "equality" as understood in the West when attempting an assessment of the position of Islamic, and in this case Kurdish, women. Freedom and equality are concepts that must be viewed on the background of the position of Western women when their struggle for changed conditions was in progress at the end of the previous century. These terms bear no relation to the status of Kurdish women at present.

In an attempt to explain the Kurdish woman's position in the community I shall now deal with the various forms of veil and the use made of them, contact with the world around, women's possibility of movement, and the degree of seclusion. I shall discuss also the distribution of authority between men and women in the home, and, finally, the degree of common life in the home. These elements will be investigated within the four female environments existing within the area visited in Southern Kurdistan.

ANALYSIS OF VEIL TYPES

The veil. Five different types of veils, each with its function, but diligently distributed in the four female environments, were found to be in use. These were as follows: The triangular neck-shoulder veil, shawl, the head veil, shpik, the yellow nylon "bridal" veil, the white European bridal veil, and the black face veil, pilik.

The first type, really a shoulder cloth fastened by means of a loop to a snap sewn onto the corner of the cap, is included among the veils because its material, crepon tulle, interwoven with metal thread, of a green, rose or light-blue colour entitles it to be called a veil, and because its function was to hide the neck and pigtails of the married women. It was an indispensable constituent of a married Kurdish woman's dress were in its complete form. The neck-shoulder veil presupposed the presence of a cap, but not necessarily the use of a turban. At Halabja, for example, it was worn with a color-covered cap

4: Hansen E-5 (1957) 1961 MA11 Kurd MA11

293 562 [184] without a turban. At night it was removed with the cap. The neck-shoulder veil was worn by all married women in the three of the four female environments. On the other hand it had lost its position in the dress of the educated urban woman, whether she was wearing a European dress or the most modern town-style Kurdish costume.

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[554] *The head veil* of light material, gauze or voile was, in the case of a married woman, laid over the cap and turban as an extra. During prayer it was tied around the neck and head. Tied round at night in the same way, it replaced all other head covering. For an unmarried girl it was her sole headgear day and night. A 12 year old girl, the step-daughter in the sheikh's house at Topzawa, put on the veil as an experiment, which suggested that her age would shortly make it necessary for her to begin to wear it. This is the head cloth or veil to which Lane refers in regard to the Arabs in Egypt[2]. Within the village aristocracy it was mainly white. The humble village woman in Topzawa and Rakawa favoured white or turquoise whilst old women were black, joining the two upper corners together by a knot at the neck, having crossed them under the chin, so that the veil lay around the head like a hood. Certain villages were characterized by head veils of uniform colour: in the now flooded ferry hamlet of Mirza Rustam all were black and in Sargalu bright red.

293 576 562 In the two urban milieus the women of the house never went up the ladder to the roof at sundown to arrange the bedding without the head veil, or a piece of material that resembled it, over the head; this applied to both adults and adolescents and even if the young and educated were wearing European summer dresses. Although my interpreter belonged to the educated urban milieu, she could not enter the guest room in her own home to greet Kurdish visitors who had come to talk to me, or bring a guest tea, without this head veil around head and neck. In the family circle and women's apartments women covered themselves with the head veil if a man entered. An educated teacher grabbed a chance head veil, covering herself with it at great speed when a man, newly-married into the family, came into the room. Although he was married to a half-sister of the young woman's brother's wife he must not see her head uncovered. Even in the village of Serkan my interpreter picked up the first veil she saw and threw it over her head when the master of the house, the old sheikh, came in to bid us welcome. Visiting her home a week after the wedding, a young educated woman wore a head veil in her father's presence (see p. 133). When her brother-in-law paid a first visit to her own home she also retained the head veil, although on that occasion she was wearing a short-skirted, armless European summer frock. The uneducated town women wore the head veil day and night.

369 The head veil was thus a general feature in the two female village environments and in the uneducated urban milieu. The veil was used sporadically in the educated urban milieu when a man's presence made this necessary, whether or not the woman was wearing Kurdish costume. European dress, it is true, revealed her legs to the knees and her arms to the shoulders, but the head still had to be covered.

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293 562 *The yellow-silver "bridal" veil* I saw worn on two occasions, both in a humble village milieu, when witnessing the arrival of the bride at the bridal house, in the one case walking the last stretch (Topzawa) and in the other riding on a white mare (Rakawa). The veil was so placed, over the married woman's

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turban, that it covered head, neck, and face, though the features could be discerned through it. On this occasion it replaced the white or coloured head veil. Nikitine refers to the use of this reddish-yellow veil cast over the head of a Kurdish bride, remarking about the colour: "Le visage de la fiancée est couvert avec une mouchoir rouge pour que ... les jours de sa vie familiale qui commencera soient rouges (c'est-à-dire heureux)"[8]. Although this yellow-ochre veil covers the face, as is also the case with the black face veil (which will be dealt with later), it must not be viewed in conjunction with it. It is a Kurdish variant of the bridal veiling, referred to in respect of Egyptian Arabs by Lane in the middle of the previous century, where, during the procession to the house, the bride, sitting under a rose or yellow-coloured canopy, is covered by a red Cashmere shawl[7], thus clothed quite differently from the accompanying women in their black, silk coverings and white face veils that reach up to, but do not cover, the eyes.

A similar bridal covering is mentioned by Granqvist in the case of Palestinian Arabs[9]. This veil is described as a thick woollen cloth, similar to the ordinary sash, thrown over the bride's head, hiding the face, whilst a caftan hides the rest of the figure. I had no opportunity of discovering whether the ochre-coloured veil was used in the other feminine milieus.

The white European bridal veil. The existence of the short, transparent red-ochre "bridal" veil, used in the humble village milieu, explains perhaps why the short white Western bridal veil could be adopted into the Kurdish dress scheme. When I saw the white bridal veil in use within the mixed educated and uneducated urban milieu (in Sulaimani), all the other women in the escorting cars were closely veiled in black. The difference between the white bride and the other women corresponds to the difference described by Lane between the Egyptian Arab bride and the women in her train[9].

The white bridal veil lacks the red colour of happiness, but the fact that the bride's car is decorated with ribbons of rose silk tied across it and a rose silk cover is sufficient to atone for this deficiency. The Kurdish white bride stood out from the rest of Kurdish female dress. However, this is perhaps less a breach of tradition than it appears at first sight, for, apart from the colour the white bridal veil seen in Sulaimani, although it seems incompatible with the close veiling otherwise practised in town, gives the bride an appearance which seems in accord with the village traditions.

The black face veil has been taken over from the Turks. It is the Turkish-Kurdish variant of the woman's veil that has been, and in many places still is, worn outside the home in Islamic areas from Morocco in the west to Afghanistan in the east, from Bosnia and Herzegovina in the north to Aden in the south. In Kurdistan the veil is never worn without an appurtenant over-garment, the Arab *abā* worn as a cowl. I mention this because in Bosnia in 1938 the same Turkish face veil was seen worn alone with a European coat and skirt. In Baghdad, on the other hand the over-garment was worn, but not the veil. By the irony of fate the veil—originally the sign of an honest woman as opposed to a harlot—is now reserved to prostitutes, who are recognised by it[10].

Sure 24, verses 30-31[11] of the Coran are usually considered to form the religious basis for the

539 [591] 293 562

Sure 24, verses 30-31 of the Coran are usually considered to form the religious basis for the complete veiling practised by Muslim women, supplemented by the recommendation, contained in Sure 33, verse 59, that the wives and daughters of the Faithful put on an over-garment when leaving the house in order that they shall be recognised as honest women. Sure 24, verses 30–31 runs: ("Say to the believing men that they cast down their looks and guard their private parts; that is purer for them; surely *Allāh* is aware of what they do). And say to the believing women that they cast down their looks and guard their private parts and not display their ornaments except what appears thereof, and let them wear their headcoverings over their bosoms, and not display their ornaments except to their husbands, or their fathers, or the fathers of their husbands, or their sons, or the sons of their husbands, or their brothers, or their brothers' sons, or their sisters' sons, or their women, or those whom their right hands possess, or the male servants not having need (of women), or the children who have not attained knowledge of what is hidden of women; and let them not strike their feet so that what they hide of their ornaments may be known; and turn to *Allāh* all of you, O believers! so that you may be successful"[12].

293 [592] 562 199

It is maintained that the veiling of women was originally foreign to the Arabs and the prophet Mohammed[13], having been adopted by Islam after the prophet's death in 632 during the years of expansion in Syria and Mesopotamia. Here contact was made with the Hellenic-Byzantine empire where women led a secluded life, a custom preserved from ancient Greece. The veil was adopted as a mark of respectability as opposed to harlotry, and veiling was further extended, justifying this by reference to the two mentioned Sures of the Coran. By obtaining religious backing the veil and shawl or cowl, though varying somewhat in the different Islamic areas, became something quite different from any other clothing. It became a symbol of a religious idea and of a definite pattern of behaviour. By its anonymity, it gave women a liberty that no other dress could provide. It aroused a respect that can only be compared with that shown to a nun's habit. Unknown and unrecognisable, she in that dress represented something inviolate and protected. No man could demand to see the face hidden by the veil. Unseen, she was not only herself but also represented half the community, and in virtue of this she could demand consideration and the maintenance of certain privileges. She herself was able to see the one to whom she was speaking, but the reverse was not the case. Woodsmall[14] quotes various statements made by women who had been accustomed to wear, or still wore, the veil. An Islamic woman from Alexandria says: "A veil ... presents strange paradoxes. It is a restrictive emphasis on sex relationship, and also on moral protection; a sign of utter dependence and also of freedom from responsibility; a handicap to real progress and a symbol of special privilege. In a word the veil represents an entirely different social system. Discarding it, therefore, involves a whole change of psychology impossible for a Western woman to understand ... so entirely foreign to you and so much a part of us ...".

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Over-garment and veil were in use in all four feminine environments in Southern Kurdistan, but to very different extents. The women of the village aristocracy did not wear them in daily life, but only when visiting a town (see p. 76). They then wore them from the moment of leaving home until they returned. For the women it was thus a sign that they were leaving a village milieu to enter an urban environment. The same applied to women of the humble village milieu.'Many times in the *city* of Sulaimani I have been addressed by closely-veiled women, who, when they raised the veil, proved to

4: Hansen E-5 (1957) 1961 MA11 Kurd MA11

be residents of Topzawa, where I never saw them veiled. Nor did I ever observe them using the head cloth or the sleeves of the costume to cover the face, even if there were male strangers in the vicinity, which Granqvist mentions as being a part of women's pattern of behaviour in Palestine[13].

On the other hand for both the educated and uneducated in the town the over-garment and veil was an indispensible part of women's dress outside the home. It was unthinkable that any woman in a town like Solaimani or the smaller trading centre, Halabja, could leave the home, shut off completely from the street, without taking with them its seclusion in the form of the *abd-o-pīčā*. These two articles of clothing were obligatory for every girl from the age of 13–14. One of the adolescent daughters in the home of my interpreter had reached this age without it being realised until her father caught sight of her one day, when, clad in a far too tight, washed-out and very slovenly European summer dress, she was about to disappear through the street door, and at once sent one of the women in the house to the *sāy* to buy the necessary *abd* and veil. The following day the girl had vanished forever from the town's street scene and an anonymous female figure appeared instead. Women of both the educated and uneducated urban milieu upheld the town practice of concealment when visiting villages. A sister of Sheikh Taifūr of Topzawa, a woman in her fifties, paid a long visit to her brother. She clad herself in *abd* and veil in order to walk from Topzawa to another village in the neighbourhood. As nobody in this covering ever carried any burden, she was accompanied on this occasion by an 8 year old daughter of the house who walked behind her on the mountain track carrying a bundle containing gifts. On the day I engaged her, my interpreter arrived at Topzawa closely veiled. She also brought with her by mule over the Charmahand pass her black over-garment, and managed in some remarkable way to get this around her as, in the dusk, with a flock of sheep streaming past the legs of our riding animals like a dark flood, we entered the small village of Sargalu nestling in a valley behind the mountains. She also sent her 13 year old brother, her invariable companion, back to to the Sheikh's house at Topzawa to fetch her over-garment and veil when, returning from a visit to the neighbouring village of Rakawa, we discovered that in our absence male guests had been received on the loggia of the guest house. Apart from that she did not wear *abd* and veil after the first day in the village. Town women thus took with them and used on isolated occasions in the villages the veil and over-garment worn in an urban milieu.

Distribution of veil types inside the four milieus.

Veil types	Village aristocracy		Humble village		Educated urban		Uneducated urban	
	unmarried	married	unmarried	married	unmarried	married	unmarried	married
Triangular neck + shoulder veil falls		+		+		(+)		+
Head cloth	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Ochre bridal veil		?		+				?
European white bridal veil						+		
Face veil black	(+)	(+)	(+)	(+)	+	+	+	+

4: Hansen E-5 (1957) 1961 MA11 Kurd MA11

As regards being restricted geographically there was no seclusion for educated urban women, though in its "transportable" form seclusion existed, for the wearing of over-garment and veil was obligatory. Just as the geographical form of seclusion applying to the women of the village aristocracy was elastic, certain categories of males outside the immediate family circle being admitted to the women's domain, so also was the "transportable" seclusion, for the degree of veiling depended upon the man meeting the woman. If the man was a stranger, say the post-office clerk, bank teller, or bus driver, complete veiling was maintained. The men on their side accepted it as perfectly natural that women whom they served or bargained with were completely anonymous and, apart from the voice, unidentifiable. Before superiors, for example the educational authorities or officials like the mayor of the town, my interpreter pushed back her veil though at the same time holding the front edges of the over-garment which goes over the head, so closely together that only a small part of her face was visible. This was the case on more official visits, but also on ordinary visits the tightly-drawn *abd* and the pushed-back veil were retained. This I saw on a visit to Sheikh Mahmud's son. On this occasion my interpreter had decked herself out in all the finest articles of clothing and jewellery the women of her family could together produce. During the visit not the slightest glimpse of all this magnificence was disclosed. Perhaps this was due to the fact that, in addition to us, two male agricultural experts were present, who seemed to have come to discuss questions in connexion with the rice harvest that year.

When dealing with traders in the *sūq*, for example in the cloth booths in the vaulted arcades, the women also pushed back their veils. Here they apparently faced men in a position subordinate to them, and could allow themselves to show a small expanse of face through the closely-held *abd*.

In the Sulaimani cinemas, both the roofed and the roofless, it would have been quite unthinkable for the women, even though closely veiled, to sit in the ordinary seats. The men sat there. For the women and the men of their family who accompanied them there were boxes with special entrances and a curtain. This curtain was not drawn aside until the theatre was dark, and was again drawn at the interval. Men in the audience must not obtain a glimpse of the women in the box.

In her outside life and during work the educated urban woman came into contact with the men's world. Sympathy between two young people might be aroused and a marriage based on personal contact and sentiment could result. However, there was no direct proposal on the part of the young man. The obligatory procedure was marriage negotiations between the women of the two families, followed by the matter being placed before the father for decision (see p. 119). Whereas the work of an educated urban woman provided her with a radius of action far outside the boundaries of the home, in non-working hours she was to be found in the precincts of the home. In leisure hours there were no mixed groups of men and women. Men, on the other hand, spent their free time in the streets or in tea houses in company with other men. Here again there was a strict division between the worlds of men and women.

Thus, like her humble village sister, the educated urban woman possessed a freedom of movement that extended just as far as, but no further than, her work outside the home justified, but, as opposed to the village woman, the educated urban woman practised a transportable seclusion in the form of *abd* and veil. This, like the seclusion of the aristocratic village woman, possessed a certain elasticity in regard to certain male categories.

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With the introduction of monogamous marriage and divorce that not only gets rid of the wife, but also dissolves the children's home, a phenomenon hitherto unknown will arise in Kurdistan and other Islamic areas that are copying our pattern of culture, the solitary mother: on the one hand the solitary divorced mother, and on the other, the result of women's entry into the labour market, the solitary unmarried mother.

Although it has been maintained from several quarters[43] that the veil and seclusion, women's withdrawn social position, were originally foreign to the Arabs and to Muhammed, and were first adopted by Islam when the Arabs came into contact with the Greek-Hellenic, Byzantine culture, the fact remains that this retired status obtained religious sanction from Sure 24, verse 31 of the Coran. Consequently, the veil and seclusion are as much a religious as a secular matter. The law of Islam *Sari'a*, goes far deeper than does Roman law. The ordinances of the Coran, the whole *fiqh* system, comprises every detail of existence, and constitutes a practical guide, a pattern of behaviour[44]. The restrictions resulting therefrom were maintained by Kurdish women in Iraq with the greatest seriousness, respect and care in all four feminine milieus.

In general, attention has been paid to the fact that women in Muslim homes where seclusion was maintained to a greater or lesser degree, were confined to certain parts of the house. There is therefore reason to point out that the man may equally well be said to be excluded from the women's apartments of all the other homes he may visit. In Kurdish villages only the guest room, a part of the squire's house, was open to him. In towns he was permitted to enter the guest room (without a glance at the courtyard) and to leave the house again just as discreetly. The core of the home was the forbidden area; the women there were the people he was not allowed to see. From the time a boy passed a certain age, a wall was suddenly raised between him and the women's world; he was shut out and reduced to the society of other men and the streets. The women belonging to his own home formed an exception.

The banks, post offices and public offices I visited were as gloomy and cheerless as barracks. A chair at a street corner or a tea house bench was the womanless world to which a male was relegated on reaching manhood. It seemed to me that the men in their male world did not thrive as much as did the women and children in their half of society. Somehow or other the women seemed to have discovered a more lively and friendly social convention between themselves than had the men, or, for that matter, than we have in the West. Under cover of the veil women were able to move about in the man's world. Outside the home their world was not devoid of men to the same extent that the men's world was devoid of women. Even though women were veiled in the street they were able to see. In many cases they were also able to talk, trade and bargain with men in the *suq*, in banks and in post offices. They could see whom they were addressing; men saw only a black veil.

In view of the great part that conformance with the rules of Islam played in the life of Kurdish women, her positive attitude to the five pillars of Islam (see chapter V), any change in her life pattern in this quarter would involve a complete transformation. It is not surprising that the altered life of women in Turkey has had to proceed hand in hand with a sustained offensive on all things Arab and